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EWS
July/ August 1981
30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE:
A HISTORY

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 4
JULY/AUGUST 1981

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THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE: A HISTORY

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COVER: Summer foliage of the white oak—an anniversary celebration of the Conservancy's leaf logo. Photo by Susan Bournique.

The Nature Conservancy is a national conservation organization committed to the preservation of natural diversity by protecting lands containing the best examples of all components of our natural world.

To date the Conservancy and its members have been responsible for the preservation of 1,820,062 acres of forests, marshes, prairies, mountains, and islands: home to rare and endangered species of wildlife and plants. 2,743 projects have been completed since the acquisition of the first preserve in 1954. Approximately 60% of all preserves are retained by the Conservancy and managed by volunteer land stewards.

A membership, non-profit organization, the Conservancy was incorporated in 1951 in the District of Columbia for scientific and educational purposes.

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PART I.

The Cause

by Dorothy Behlen

At the entrance to a rare wild pocket of New York's Westchester County—the Mianus River Gorge Preserve—a lean, weathered man waits to welcome his visitors. His blue eyes crinkle a bit at the edges in greeting. On his left boot is a diminutive red squirrel that scrambles onto his pants cuff, up his trouser leg, and finally reaches his shoulder. From its human perch, the tame squirrel eyes the guests.

The man is chief warden and naturalist Jim Gibb, a transplanted Scotsman who was trained in England as a horticulturist. Gibb came to New York in 1929, where he worked for years landscaping Westchester County estates. Many of the old estates he helped make beautiful are gone; but much of the county remains rural, with farm fields and wooded, rolling hills that are dotted with horse barns and large houses.

Gibb retired to a full-time volunteer job as caretaker of The Nature Conservancy's Mianus River Gorge Preserve. He lives with his wife Irene opposite the sanctuary's entrance on winding Mianus River Road. For 20 years, he has built trails, led tours, and carried out a detailed management plan that he developed for the preserve.

At the shelter where Gibb stands with his guests, a ten-foot-long map details the highlights of each of several different paths in the sanctuary. There are exactly five miles of these trails. "I know," says Gibb in the Scottish burr that hasn't left him, "I measured them all with a 200-foot steel tape."

The warden steps onto the main trail nearby and points to wooden stakes peeking out from among the fallen leaves—plant markers that he made in his basement and carefully placed to label wildflowers. Gibb's favorites are the showy orchis, which blooms in only one or two places on the 375-acre preserve, and the stemless lady's-slipper orchid, clustering off the path in numbers of 200 or more.

Visitors who walk south on the main trail come to the schoolchildren's favorite, the Woodpecker Tree—named for the countless oblong cavities made in the wood by a resident pileated woodpecker. More than 140 species of birds have been spotted nesting in or just passing through the Gorge. In the silent hours, when the preserve is emptied of boisterous children, Gibb has witnessed a great horned owl being mobbed by a flock of crows. Once he saw a mixed flock of birds dive down through the trees and pursue a gray fox. Quiet visitors to the Gorge may be rewarded with a glimpse of a white-tailed deer (Gibb says he has seen as many as four at one time). Such a sight is even more rewarding if you stop to think where you are—in an essentially untouched natural area barely an hour from midtown Manhattan.

A mile or so down the trail, the moist scent of fallen oak and maple leaves gives way to the clean smell of hemlocks. After passing Fern Glen (Gibb pronounces it "Fin Glen"), you begin to hear the bubbling of the Mianus River. Here, deep in the preserve, lies its heart: the Hemlock Cathedral and the high, rocky promontories that survey the river 200 feet below. The Cathedral embraces 20 acres of steep hillside covered with virgin eastern hemlocks. Two of the giant hemlocks, each four feet in diameter at chest height, bear small metal tags that date them back to the 1680's. The two ancient trees and their mates arch 100 feet over the hillside, achieving the gothic effect that inspired the Cathedral's name.

Sitting at the edge of the cliff that drops off from the Cathedral, you can dangle your feet high over the river that splashes through the steep ravine. Visible from this perch is a short, mud-packed trail that fishermen use to reach the river, where they try their luck catching the brook, brown, and rainbow trout stocked each year by the state. The Gorge, which slopes into a gaping "V" above the

river, is believed to have been formed during the Pleistocene Era, around the time when the sheet of ice that covered much of North America began its retreat.

In the millennia since the ice left, little has changed in the Mianus River Gorge. The Mohican Indians hunted and fished the neighboring countryside until they were driven away or killed by Dutch and English colonists who came to farm. The name "Mianus" comes from a Mohican chief who didn't take the homesteaders' encroachment lightly: he was killed near the Gorge in 1664 when he attacked three settlers, killing one before the other two got him. Ironically, "Mianus" means "He Who Gathers Together." The name makes more sense today, standing for one of the first concerted efforts among conservationists to hold onto a crucial part of their heritage.

The early white settlers farmed the Gorge's ridgetops, growing potatoes and raising dairy cows. But the ravine itself—too steep to plow or log, or even to graze—was left alone. After World War II, however, the area experienced a housing boom. It looked as though developers might find it economical to replace the Gorge's virgin trees with bungalows.

Fortunately, some Americans were beginning to look at land as more than just a means to national wealth. As the last bits of true frontier were being snapped up by a rapidly expanding population, a few people began to see that wilderness, a national wealth in itself, should be left untouched.

There were more than just aesthetic concerns involved, however. Cold, hard facts supported the people who first thought about saving wild land for its natural diversity. As the imprint of humans upon the earth became more indelible, the need to preserve a genetic storehouse grew more important. Untouched tracts were needed to serve as a point of comparison, against which ecologists could study the effects of our actions on developed land. Furthermore, by maintaining ecosystems in their entirety, conservationists were buying natural insurance policies against an uncertain future. It was this element of science that stayed with The Nature Conservancy as it grew from a collection of ecologists into a private conservation organization responsible for protecting almost 2 million acres.

The group's first acquisition was 60 acres of the Mianus River Gorge. But before the $30,000 project was initiated, the leaders of the young organization were faced with many questions: Who would raise the money? Was it wise to buy the land themselves? If they did, who would manage it?

During those early years, with the help of passionate scientists like Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, many Americans were becoming inspired

Preserve caretaker Jim Gibb at the entrance to Mianus River Gorge, the Conservancy's first preserve.

An August day on the Mianus River.

by the spirit of conservation. Because of this spirit, The Nature Conservancy's efforts and achievements have mushroomed. Mianus is now a 395-acre "symbol" for a nationwide system of preserves that includes most of Virginia's barrier-island chain and the largest of California's Channel islands, Santa Cruz. The Conservancy's holdings include an expanse running along 22 miles of the Niobrara River, where dozens of paleontological sites are hidden by sandhill-prairie grasses and shaded by western conifers. And the system is backed, in part, by the two largest challenge grants ever made to a conservation effort: $15 million from the Richard King Mellon Foundation and $10 million from the Goodhill Foundation.

Mianus was first preserved by amateurs who wanted to save the site for its intrinsic value. Today, the Conservancy's volunteers and staff are able to look at national preservation needs with the help of the sophisticated system of state natural heritage programs. Computers are used to organize scientific data on natural features (species, biological communities, and so on) so that researchers can identify and rank areas in order of preservation priority. Twenty-four states and the Tennessee Valley Authority region currently have heritage programs.

Identification is the first step toward preservation —a step carried out by both scientists and volunteers to this day. After that comes protection, which the Conservancy achieves by acquiring land, or in a variety of other ways—some old, some new and innovative. The Conservancy manages roughly half of the areas it acquires; others are turned over to agencies better able to care for them. Of the preserves that the organization maintains, only a handful are managed by paid professionals. The rest are run by an army of volunteers, such as Jim Gibb at the Mianus River Gorge.

Gibb's combination of training and dedication embodies a mix of emotion and science, aesthetics and practicality. The Conservancy's assemblage of scientists, businessmen, and conservation-minded volunteers has created an exceptional philanthropic formula. The organization's single drive to preserve ecologically significant land sets it apart from any other group. The cause goes back to 1917, when a small band of scientists met to consider what was to be done to save the nation's remaining natural areas.

Dorothy Behlen was the staff botanist for the American Forestry Association where she wrote a bi-monthly column for *American Forests*. After spending a year researching the Conservancy's history, she is now a free-lance writer.

PART II.

Taking Root

by Dorothy Behlen

When conservationists study the growth of environmental awareness in this country, one crucial fact is often forgotten: scientific advances, which brought about the Industrial Revolution and helped bring about the rapid loss of American wildernesses, also contributed to the concern Americans began to feel for this loss.

A half-century before the environmental cause became a recognized movement, practitioners of a then relatively obscure science called ecology were openly discussing the possibility that developing all the nation's untouched land could lead to disaster.

Victor Shelford, an eminent animal ecologist at the University of Chicago, joined the chorus of concern over the disappearance of natural areas. In 1915, Shelford and Robert Wolcott, an ecologist at the University of Nebraska, proposed the formation of a scientific association to deal with the problem. At a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Columbus, Ohio, 50 members voted to form the Ecological Society of America. Victor Shelford became the first president of the group, whose stated purpose was "to promote the scientific study of organisms in relation to the environment and to facilitate an exchange of ideas among ecologists." Their laboratories were to be natural areas across the country.

In order to have natural areas to study, the scientists needed to ensure that some of those sites remained untouched. In 1917 a committee chaired by Victor Shelford began listing natural areas in various parts of the country. The result, *The Naturalist's Guide to the Americas*, was published in 1926. Its avowed purpose was simply to make available for study "as much of the original biota of North America as possible." But Shelford hinted at more ambitious uses: "An inventory of available areas and the extent to which they are modified," he wrote, "is naturally one of the early steps in the preservation of suitable areas for ecological study."

This hint of active land conservation eventually caused open debate within the community of ecologists. The Ecological Society was largely set up as a study organization, to identify and research natural areas and to publish scientific papers and journals. However, some members grew more vocal and began to lobby for legislation to protect identified wildernesses. For example, E. Lucy Braun, an ecologist with the University of Cincinnati and a prominent member of the Ecological Society, led an effort without success to create a "primeval monument system" under the aegis of the National Park Service.

The Society struggled along through the Depression years. Members who could not afford dues were regularly carried without payment at renewal time. (This easygoing attitude was possible because the annual operating budget for each of the Society's two committees was only $50). But the Ecological Society's own problems were quickly dwarfed when World War II broke out, and the country turned all its resources toward winning the war. Such a "total" war, with its demands on natural resources, raised questions in the minds of preservation-minded ecologists regarding the use of national parks and other preserves. A tract in New Mexico, which was being considered as a possible addition to the White Sands National Monument, became part of a bombing range. The threat of a timber harvest hung over the Olympic National Park like fog—its Sitka spruce was prime for use in Allied airplane construction. One ecologist wrote: ". . . in the past the cry of defense has been accepted without adequate study regarding the justness of the claim. We suffered large losses in the First World War where government areas of timber, for instance, were exploited in order to save private interests or holdings for future profit."

The activists in the Ecological Society continued to push Congress in an attempt to lessen the exploitation of American wildernesses. A sampling of legislation that the society campaigned against shows how desperate its cause had become: a bill to repeal the President's authority to establish

monuments by proclamation (that authority was most recently used to set aside more than 100 million acres in Alaska), and a bill permitting the grazing of livestock in national parks and monuments.

As a whole, however, the Ecological Society was not entirely pleased with the work of its activists. A majority of the members felt that the group should limit itself to the important work of publishing a journal and serving member ecologists. The committee in which most of the Society's activists had been doing their work was abolished in 1944.

Those scientists who wanted to actively preserve natural areas decided to divorce their defunct committee from the Ecological Society. On March 28, 1946, an independent organization was formed, containing 158 members. The new group was called the Ecologists Union. It planned to continue lobbying for the preservation of natural land. Because it was small and young—and concerned about what it could accomplish—the Union briefly considered affiliating with a larger organization, but soon opted for complete independence.

The group's work seemed more important than ever. Although wartime demands on natural resources had ended with V-Day, a new, more lasting threat had surfaced: housing construction, fueled by the needs of millions of new postwar families. At the Union's first meeting in St. Louis, the ecologists set three goals: to maintain original conditions in specified natural areas; to preserve additional original plant and animal communities of scientific value; and to encourage scientific research in preserved areas. Members of the group's new executive board were listed by the plant community type they represented, rather than by their college or university, which is the usual practice. For example: Lee Dice was "listed" as deciduous forests of the Northeast, and Asa Weese represented the prairie district.

The Union boldly resolved to take direct action when natural areas were in imminent danger. What the group meant exactly by "direct action," it did not say, perhaps because as many as half the members of the new organization were U.S. Forest Service personnel—federal employees who were prohibited from attempts to influence legislation. They could, however, provide up-to-date information to those Union members who were less restricted. Non-Forest Service members were primarily scientists from universities across the country. In many instances, these members' schools—such as Rutgers, Princeton, Duke, and the Universities of Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Arizona—became organizational sponsors. The Union was further aided when the Society of American Foresters organized a committee on natural areas in 1947 to help the ecologists locate representative examples of old-growth forest.

Union members lobbied Congress actively on many of the same issues that the Ecological Society had followed. Among the bills the Union championed was one favoring purchase of wilderness in Superior National Forest in Minnesota for use as an international park. In addition, the group opposed the transfer of large western grazing lands from federal to state or private control, and they pressed for the creation of an extensive prairie reserve in the Midwest. Union officers urged members to write their congressmen about important conservation issues.

The young Ecologists Union continued to grow. But it needed more members, especially those who were not ecologists, according to George Fell, then a young scientist with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service in Illinois. In a letter to Charles Kendeigh, a Union officer, Fell wrote, ". . . if we could get more popular support, we would be able to do much that we, as professional scientists, are incapable of doing alone. We need persons with varied talents, occupations, and personalities to contribute their efforts to the organization." Slowly, scientists who were not strictly ecologists began to join the Union, which now had 294 members. George Fell was one such "non-ecologist."

Fell, with a degree in botany from the University of Illinois, was chairman of the conservation committee of the Illinois Academy of Science. In an article for *Nature* magazine, he proposed a system of state natural-area reserves that would be acquired by purchase or donation to ensure their preservation. The response to his proposal was great.

In New York, December 1949, at a joint meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Ecologists Union, Richard Pough (a Union board member and later a Conservancy president) persuaded Fell to move to Washington, D.C., to open an office for the Union. Without returning to Illinois for either clothing or furniture, the Fells drove south to look for an office site.

The following spring, Congressman Charles Edward Bennett proposed legislation to create a "Nature Conservancy" that would aid the National Park Service and the individual states in natural-area preservation. The Ecologists Union would presumably have functioned as backbone of the organization. Bennett's bill provided that the organization use means—including the establishment of natural area reserves—to "preserve, or aid in

How the early Conservancy was housed: top, Barbara Fell in 1953 at the Washington townhouse office on Mintwood Place; above, the Fells (Barbara, George, and cat Zuhra) in 1957 at their home and work-place on 22nd Street, N.E.

the preservation of, areas, objects, and fauna and flora having scientific, educational, or aesthetic significance." The concept for the legislation was borrowed from the newly established British Nature Conservancy, a quasi-governmental organization that advised the government on the preservation of natural areas, conducted research on the sites, and helped manage them.

Congress never acted on Congressman Bennett's bill. The legislation was placed on a back burner and reintroduced the following year, when the Union decided to discontinue its support for the measure until the organization had a firmer financial base. By the time the group was on its feet, it no longer needed government help, and legislation was rarely mentioned again.

Meanwhile, George Fell had opened an office, of sorts. The "office" was a corner of a table in the American Nature Study Society's library in downtown Washington. (Little wonder that the Union had thought of affiliating with large organizations!) But Willard Van Name of the American Museum of Natural History did not think the group's size was a liability. He advised that since the Union needed support, it should simply "get busy on a small scale and give proof of efficiency."

George Fell did indeed get busy. He developed a list of 100 natural areas that he thought should be acquired—though he could find no one willing to appropriate the land. Fell briefly considered having the Ecologists Union itself purchase a piece

of property but discarded the idea because of legal encumbrances, deciding instead to explore other preservation methods. For example, he wrote a handbook on conservation techniques for professionals working in farm management, wildlife management, and outdoor recreation.

On September 11, 1950, the Ecologists Union formally adopted a new name: The Nature Conservancy. Inspired by the British namesake, the title had won out over a number of other suggestions, including "Nature Conservation Society of America" and "Nature Preservation Society."

Why the change? "Ecologists Union" was thought unsuitable because "ecologist" had not yet become a household word and in 1950 the word "union" had unpleasant connotations. If the group was to attract a larger membership, it had to interest the layman. In addition, the new name distinguished the organization from the parent Ecological Society.

The Nature Conservancy began anew. Members agreed that there were several causes in which they would *not* become involved: land-use or recreation issues; publishing a magazine (that, of course, was to come later); and topical subjects such as wilderness, national parks, and wildlife, as they were being addressed by other organizations. The Conservancy decided to keep its focus on the study and preservation of biotic communities and natural areas. As Fell wrote to the first Conservancy president, Stanley Cain, ". . . most scientific societies exist for the primary purpose of serving members; in our case the members exist primarily to serve The Nature Conservancy."

On November 29, 1950, The Nature Conservancy was granted tax exemption as a private, not-for-profit organization. Dues, contributions, gifts, and bequests to the group all became tax deductible. The young Conservancy may not have realized the huge effect this new status would someday have —allowing donors the benefits of tax deductions for their gifts of land and money.

George and Barbara Fell worked to enlist more members. They wrote a variety of solicitation letters, including one to the General Motors Corporation. A *New York Times* story about the organization, run in 1951, helped boost the Fells' membership drive. It stated that "The scientific, educational, and aesthetic values of such living museums as those envisaged by The Nature Conservancy are enormous. In addition to their obvious use in the study of basic biological research, these virgin tracts of forest, desert, prairie, mountain, swamp . . . will one day be of incomparable interest as the sole survivors of the America that was. The important thing is to save as many of the diverse types as possible—now."

The Fells' efforts and the publicity began to pay off. The Conservancy's membership doubled to 521, and in the fall of 1951 the office moved from the library table into space shared with The Wilderness Society in a Washington townhouse. Shortly thereafter, on October 11, a document was drawn up and signed incorporating the group in the District of Columbia, with George Fell as executive secretary. The certificate of incorporation was legally recorded 11 days later.

In spring 1952, The Nature Conservancy published "A System of Nature Reserves," a plan for an order of refuges or sanctuaries that would harbor rare and endangered species and examples of different habitats and plant communities. The actual identification, acquisition, and maintenance of natural areas were to be done on the state or regional level. Therefore, an effort was made to enlist the support of a member-volunteer in each state to act as the Conservancy's representative and to promote the group's program. But the organization still shied away from buying land itself; "actual ownership of nature reserves," the plan said, "is of secondary importance."

Nevertheless, when Mettler's Woods, a 65-acre tract of timber uncut since 1690, was threatened, the Conservancy took action to help preserve it. Rutgers University, which wanted the New Jersey land for research, had agreed to manage the property if $80,000 could be raised to buy it. The trees were already marked for cutting when the Conservancy issued an appeal to its members—not for letters to their congressmen, but for cold cash. The Old Dominion Foundation eventually pledged $20,000 toward the purchase of Mettler's Woods, and the project was completed when the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners guaranteed the remaining funds.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ernest "Lank" Osborne, a professor at Teachers College Columbia in New York City, had visited a weekend land auction on Long Island. Sunken Forest, a small, pristine stand of hollies on Fire Island, was up for sale. Osborne and two friends bid on the tract to keep it out of the hands of a developer. They won, and then realized they would have to mortgage their homes to pay for the property. With the help of Conservancy Board member Richard Pough, Ernest Osborne approached The Nature Conservancy and Wildlife Preserves, Inc. Both groups agreed to take on Sunken Forest as a joint project. Wildlife Preserves, an organization formed to set aside land around New York City, would actually acquire and manage the area; the Conservancy would use its tax exemption and national scope to raise money for the purchase.

Sunken Forest Preserve, a bay-to-beach segment of New York's Fire Island.

The project was completed, but not without problems. Public sympathy had not yet fully arrived on the side of natural area preservation. Some urbanites who were moving into rural areas, like the one in which Sunken Forest was located, felt threatened by the wildness they found. One Conservancy member, in a report on the Sunken Forest project to the organization's Board of Governors, commented that the residents "fear wilderness. They look upon any open land or undeveloped area as a breeding place for disease and vermin. The Park Commission is deluged with complaints about caterpillars and frogs invading front yards."

Nonetheless, money came in to acquire the forest, including a contribution from Theodore Edison—Thomas Edison's son—and his wife. In February 1953, the Old Dominion Foundation (which later merged with the Avalon Foundation to form the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation) donated $1,000. Many members of the Conservancy's Board were surprised that funds could actually be acquired for land conservation.

The Conservancy still had a tiny operating budget, and there was no money to pay George Fell for his work as executive director. By working as a medical technician from 1950 to 1954, Barbara Fell supported both the family and the office. The little office was furnished with government surplus goods left over from World War II. George Fell bought surplus typewriters, surplus printing equipment, and even surplus paper. They found wooden file cabinets for 27 cents each, rewound typewriter ribbons, and used both sides of adding-machine tape. George also became an expert at repairing all the old equipment.

The work, all unpaid, was strenuous. To have Conservancy bulletins ready for work the next day, George often stayed up all night printing and folding them. One Thanksgiving the Fells took time only to cook and eat a canned chicken before returning to work. In 1953 they succeeded in boosting membership to 1,100. Not only was the Conservancy attracting attention from other conservationists, but the group itself was beginning to contribute a valuable service to the conservation cause. Fell comments in his quiet voice: "All kinds of little projects or groups scattered around the country had people trying to preserve areas, and there was no backing for them. So the basic concept was to provide an overall administrative basis for individuals to start from scratch and work on saving those areas."

People living in the heavily populated or agricultural areas—such as the Eastern Seaboard megalopolis—which were already devoid of most natural qualities were more aware of what was being lost. In those states inhabitants anxious to save remaining wild areas were organizing. In February 1954, the Conservancy's Board of Governors approved the formation of its first chapter —Eastern New York. The goal and intent of the chapter was to acquire natural land.

A small band of scientists and volunteers like the Fells had worked hard to plant the first seed for land preservation. Now, with people working close to the areas in need of protection, the seed was taking root.

Cub Scouts help with posting at Mianus River Gorge: "Do Not Enter With Gun, Dog, Axe, Trap, or Fire. . . ."

PART III.

The First Acre

by Dorothy Behlen

Gloria Anable is a persistent woman whose delicate appearance veiled a determined will. She had trained as a biologist with the famous explorer William Beebe, and had set a world record in 1932 by descending a quarter mile into the ocean in a bathysphere. New York's Mianus River Gorge was considerably more tame than either the marine depths or the jungles of Guiana—where she had once led an expedition—but the area was beautiful, and it intrigued her. She and her husband Tony, a chemical engineer for a nearby Connecticut firm, often took tranquil horseback rides through the gorge.

Increasingly, the Anables found their idyllic weekend rides disturbed by the sharpening contrast between the forested gorge and the neighboring land. The couple began to spend more of their weekends meeting landowners and neighbors around the gorge and eventually formed a committee that aimed to guarantee the area's preservation.

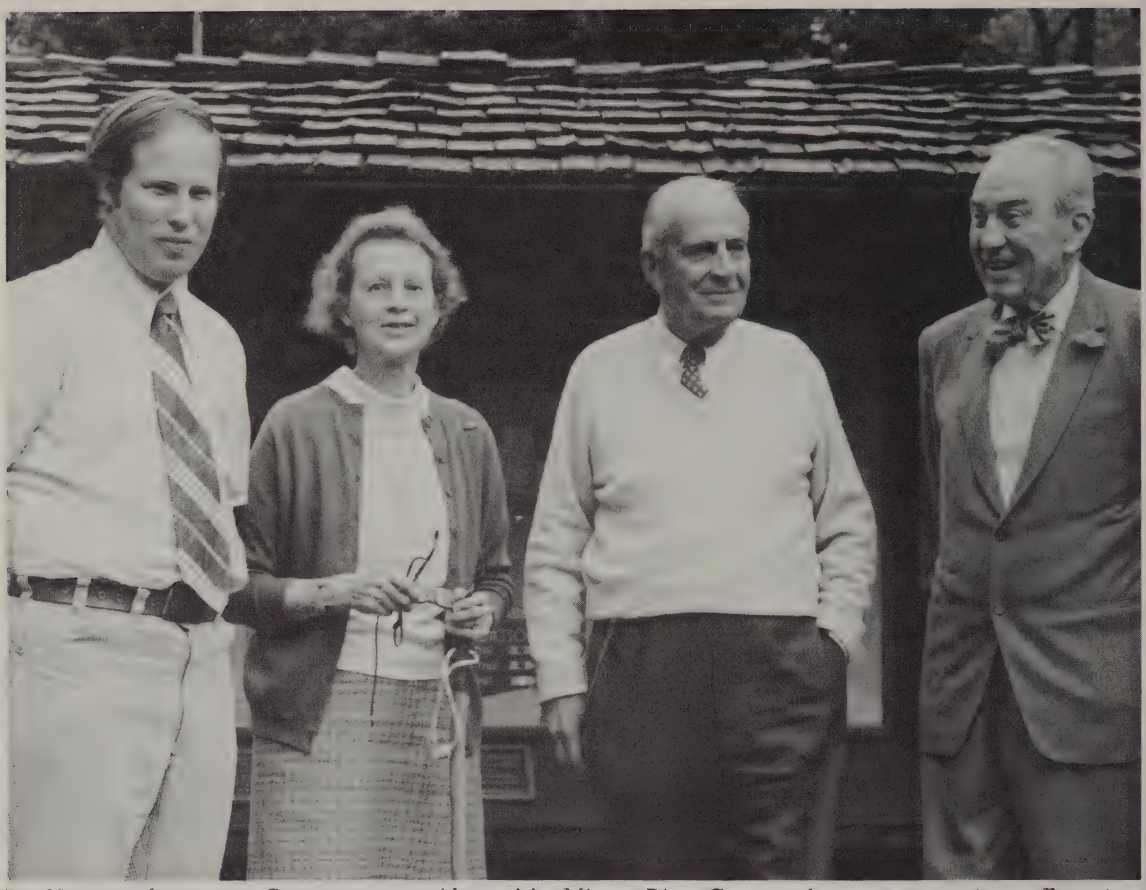
On December 12, 1953, the five founders of the Mianus River Gorge Conservation Committee led an evaluation team through the quiet ravine to determine the real value of the property as a natural area. The team, composed of a representative from The Nature Conservancy and officials from three other conservation groups, inspected the land and basically said to the committee, "What are you waiting for? Start raising money and buy it." That night the committee members began work.

But before fund raising was begun, the committee found it had to deal with an immediate threat to the Gorge. In fall 1953, a small item in the local paper announced that the Greenwich Water Company planned to erect a dam on the Mianus River in North Stamford to supply water to the towns of Greenwich and Port Chester. The reservoir formed by the 275-foot dam would submerge much of the area that the committee wanted to buy, including the virgin stand of conifers in a section of the gorge called Hemlock Cathedral.

The following spring, Tony Anable appeared before the New York State Water Power and Control Commission to represent the Mianus River Gorge Committee and 16 other groups, including local garden clubs, Boy Scout troops, Audubon chapters, and horseback riding clubs. The impact of this impressive show of solidarity was enhanced by Anable's thoughtful presentation. He explained that the committee was not contesting the right of the water company to dam and tap the river. Instead, the group simply wanted the company to help protect the natural qualities of the Mianus River and its gorge, and he offered the committee's help.

Before the Greenwich Water Company could ask, the Mianus Committee prepared a proposal limiting the dam to 257 feet, which would allow enough water to be impounded for domestic consumption but would not flood the Hemlock Cathedral or the gorge. The Water Power and Control Commission, which had final jurisdiction over the matter, agreed to the proposal. The gorge was spared, and a local group could congratulate itself for a conservation victory won without legal battles.

But the back-patting didn't last long. On Christmas Eve, 1954, as the Anables were decorating their tree, a messenger arrived. Mary Lanier Day, a landowner whose 60 acres included the Hemlock Cathedral, had received an offer for her land. She intended to accept it unless the Mianus Committee



Pat Noonan, then a new Conservancy president, visits Mianus River Gorge and preserve committee officers in September of 1973. From left: Noonan, Gloria Hollister Anable, Anthony Anable, and Eugene Curry.

could make a similar offer by January 1, 1955—just seven days away.

The Christmas tree was never finished. The Anables spent the rest of the week tracking down the founders of the committee, who were scattered across the country celebrating the holidays. Finally, everyone was present for a meeting on New Year's Eve. At first, not all the members felt ready to undertake the project, but they finally agreed to try. Telephone negotiations with Mary Day lasted until 1:00 a.m., January 1, when she verbally agreed to sell to the committee for $30,000. A contract was quickly typed and placed in Mrs. Day's mailbox just before dawn. To meet the one-third down payment, three of the members pledged their life insurance policies.

Through the winter and spring, garden clubs in New York and Connecticut helped the Mianus River Gorge Conservation Committee to complete the purchase of the 60 acres. The various campaigns, drives, raffles, and benefit performances were very successful; but as the summer deadline for the final payment drew uncomfortably near, the committee still lacked $7,500.

Meanwhile, a new member of The Nature Conservancy's Board of Governors, Ernest Brooks of the Old Dominion Foundation, was invited to see the gorge. He walked all through the area, admired the giant trees of the Hemlock Cathedral, listened to the river as it ran through the ravine. Brooks had the foundation pledge $7,500 to the committee, via the Conservancy, stipulating that it was not an outright donation but rather a loan to be repaid to the Conservancy for use in other conservation projects. The pledge, therefore, was not only responsible for the Conservancy's first acquisition, but gave birth to its revolving fund as well. On June 2, 1955, the deed to the first tract of the Mianus River Gorge Preserve was transferred to The Nature Conservancy.

The Mianus River Gorge acquisition set a pattern for Conservancy projects. In years to come, committees scattered across the country would borrow money for local natural-area conservation efforts. After fund raising, the committees would return the loan to the national organization, and the money would be "recycled" to another local project.

Dome Island in Lake George.

Acquiring the first tract in the Mianus River Gorge was not a difficult process, but the deadlines were tight and unnerving. By comparison, the Conservancy's next projects seemed easy. Several were gifts.

John Apperson, a General Electric Company engineer, offered the Conservancy an entire island in Lake George, New York. His only requirement in donating Dome Island was that $20,000 be raised first, to endow the property and to provide for its maintenance. Fifteen years earlier Apperson himself had saved the island when he purchased it the night before it was to be sold to a hotel chain. He wanted to see the tiny isle kept wild, undisturbed—and free of tourists (he went so far as to post signs on the island explaining how to treat rattlesnake bites, although there were no snakes). Dome Island was within the sphere of the Conservancy's Eastern New York Chapter, which quickly tackled its first project and set out to raise the money for maintaining the new preserve.

Another donation to the Conservancy was Butler Sanctuary—the second project in Westchester County, New York—not far from Mianus River Gorge. Corkscrew Swamp in Florida followed. The Conservancy helped buy the first 5,760 acres for the National Audubon Society. In order to meet a nine-day deadline, $145,000 was raised. Several pledges came from leaders of the business world. Conservancy members, alerted through an appeal in the organization's newsletter, contributed a total of $5,000. Now containing 11,000 acres, Corkscrew Swamp encompasses one of the largest remaining virgin stands of bald cypress trees.

The Old Dominion Foundation became a contributor to the Conservancy's general operating fund, allowing the group to begin paying its executive director, George Fell, an "honorarium." Enough operating money was available to hire a secretary to help with the mail, which had doubled. Land acquisition continued.

Some areas offered to the Conservancy as gifts or for sale were desirable additions to a system of natural preserves. Others, such as vacant suburban lots and not-so-special backyard woods, were not. The Board of Governors had to establish criteria for the land it would accept. Its policy was printed in a 1954 bulletin. Land, it stated, "must provide at least one of the following" before inclusion into the sanctuary system: "natural community types that are not adequately preserved elsewhere, habitat for rare species, or accessibility to users who do not have other adequate areas at their disposal." The areas that qualified did not need to be virginal; only relatively untouched, compared to surrounding lands. In a change from earlier Ecological Society policy, land that was inaccessible or "supposedly safe" from development now also qualified for preservation. Earlier, the Society's ecologists had counted mere classification of property as a natural area to be a form of preservation. Many of the sites so "preserved" were later lost to development.

Several new land acquisition projects were started in the Midwest, including Volo and Wauconda Bogs in Illinois, which were threatened with drainage and development. In six months' time the Conservancy raised almost half the money needed to purchase the bogs. Volo was acquired in 1958, and Wauconda was preserved two years later.

Gifts of land also continued: 1,000 acres were donated in New York and a pond in Missouri was saved. One Conservancy member expreses the willingness of landowners to donate property near their homes as "enlightened self-interest," a way to ensure the continuing beauty of the surrounding landscape. But Alvin Whitney, an Eastern New York Chapter member, thinks that many donors feel differently. "We . . . should remember," he says, "that it must pull their heartstrings sometimes when they realize they have relinquished their most precious possession." In many cases, Whitney stresses, the donors could not preserve the land themselves; they had to save it by giving it up. He tells of a conversation he had with Francis Cope, who gave the Conservancy Woodbourne Forest. On a recent visit to what had been "his forest," Cope had begun to transplant some seedling trees. Mrs. Cope stopped him, saying, "Remember, it doesn't belong to you now." Whitney recalls the sad smile Cope wore when he told the story.

Professor Richard Goodwin was elected Conservancy President in 1955, serving a two-year term, from 1956 to '58. Sometimes known as "Johnny Appleseed," he had a knack for finding people who were interested in the Conservancy's work and leaving them with a charter for a chapter in their state. Almost all his organizational "seeds" took, and chapters sprouted across the country.

Dr. Goodwin had time to make the necessary trips from state to state during his second year because he took a sabbatical from Connecticut College, where he was a popular teacher of botany. It was not the glorified vacation that comes to mind when non-academics think of sabbaticals. Conservancy duties left little time for relaxing.

In three years the Conservancy had preserved or had helped preserve 14 natural areas totaling 8,161 acres. None of the properties was larger than 2,000 acres. But in 1957, the Conservancy undertook a major conservation effort that was to engage the organization for years. The project became known as the Northern California Coast

Conservancy leaders at the 1965 Annual Meeting in Storrs, Connecticut. From left: retiring president Richard Pough, newly elected president Richard Goodwin, and Victor Shelford—founder (in 1917) of the Committee for the Preservation of Natural Conditions, a forerunner of The Nature Conservancy.

Range Preserve (NCCRP).

It was an extraordinarily beautiful place, encompassing an unaltered watershed as well as what researchers believe is the finest example of California's coastal forest as it was before the timber cutters arrived and the sawmills were built. Heath Angelo, owner of the vast 4,000-acre range, wanted to see the land preserved; but he had been turned down by other organizations, which thought the tract would be too expensive to buy and administer—especially since Angelo could not afford to endow the project with the funds to hire a full-time manager.

After seeing the property, Dick Goodwin was so enthusiastic that he went right back to his botany class in Connecticut—he was teaching again—and raised $10 from his students. The Conservation and Research Foundation pledged that it would donate $5,000 if the project was undertaken. But most of the money was much more difficult to collect. As magnificent as the Reserve's forest of redwood and Douglas-fir seemed to eastern visitors, Californians were not as impressed. Natives had seen areas like Heath Angelo's property before. Yet the project was tackled, and fund raising went on for years. It was well worth the effort.

The Conservancy's Northern California Coast Range Preserve reigns as one of the organization's finest model preserves. Today about 4,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management property, which has been set aside to protect its natural features, adjoins the NCCRP, meaning that an area of 8,000 acres is actually being protected. The Bureau and the Conservancy have worked out compatible plans to safeguard the wild, natural character of the entire watershed, and under terms of a cooperative agreement, the Conservancy manages the federal land as a part of the preserve.

The year 1958 saw the Old Dominion Foundation make a grant of $25,000 for the Conservancy's revolving fund, which was named the "Natural Areas Matching Fund." There were 12 chapters,

Heath Angelo at the base of a mature Douglas fir in the Conservancy's Northern California Coast Range Preserve.

and by fall, the Mianus River Gorge Conservation Committee had expanded the original 60-acre preserve into 183 acres. James B. Ross followed Dr. Goodwin as Conservancy president, and George Fell retired as executive director. He and Barbara returned to Illinois and established the Natural Land Institute to pursue natural area preservation in their home state. Before leaving the Conservancy in '58, George Fell hired Josephine Johnson to handle membership. Jo is still the Conservancy's membership secretary, now looking after more than 100,000 members.

In 1966 the presidency finally became a paid position, when Charles Foster accepted the job, which combined the responsibilities of the prior presidential role with those of the Conservancy's executive director. The position that had been called "president" became what it still is today—chairman of the Board of Governors.

During the 1960's The Nature Conservancy began its gradual transition into a corporate structure. Contributions and membership soared; books like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* were awakening the public to the need for environmental conservation. The Conservancy set its protection sights higher, from 60-acre plots to entire ecosystems; from a single bog to miles of shoreline.

The Nature Conservancy has indeed grown far beyond the small band of dedicated ecologists who, in 1915, saw the need to preserve natural lands and planted the seed to do it. At the time that William D. Blair took over the Conservancy's presidency from Patrick F. Noonan in spring 1980, Blair listed examples of what the organization had protected in *one* year alone: bald eagle, plains grizzly, ocelot and jaguarundi (those exotic-sounding feline species have been helped by the Conservancy's rapidly growing international program), rare bunch grasses, peregrine falcon, American mountain lion, osprey, razorbill auk, whooping and sandhill cranes, a rare trillium, manatee, red-cockaded woodpecker, flying squirrel, dwarf trout lily, long-billed curlew, spruce grouse, rare desert fishes, Indiana bat, green salamander, Aleutian Canada goose, Kankakee mallow, white lady's-slipper orchids, a bog, a stream, a prairie, an island.

That was the *good* news. Bill Blair added that in some states no more than a decade may remain to save areas that have been identified as priority sites for protection—the land is being developed that quickly. To safeguard these wild areas, says Executive Vice President Greg Low, the Conservancy need only see to it that one-half of 1 percent of the United States landscape is preserved. At this writing, that leaves less than 10 million acres to go.

PART IV.

Vignettes

by Jay Heinrichs

Volunteers fill the years of The Nature Conservancy's history. Indeed volunteers are *the Conservancy. They created and for many years operated the organization, acquired and established the first preserves. They continue to serve in chapters and preserve committees nationwide and to care for most of the Conservancy's sanctuaries. The previous pages of this* News *touch on some of these generous and foresighted people; the following article describes several others. Unfortunately, no publication is sufficient in size to "introduce" all of our volunteers to the Conservancy's members. We wish we could.*

An outsider to The Nature Conservancy might be surprised that a random sampling of volunteers would reveal a variety of backgrounds and professions—teachers, bankers, attorneys, scientists. "We couldn't exist without the devotion of volunteers," says Arizona State Director Tamra Peters, who used to coordinate volunteer activities. "And almost everyone has a talent or skill to contribute."

In many cases, these volunteers have also learned skills outside their vocations in order to help the Conservancy. One of the most important skills is the ability to instill in others a concern for preserving natural land. Protecting a remnant wildnerness is not always as easy to "sell" as saving a baby seal or creating a new recreational park. Arguing for natural diversity is not a simple task.

Conservancy Board of Governors member Hubert W. "Hub" Vogelmann knows how to win support for preserving natural diversity. A professor of botany at the University of Vermont, he was instrumental in saving Shelburne Pond. It wasn't easy; Vermont is a small state where raising funds for conservation is often difficult. To protect the "pond"—actually a 650-acre lake—it was necessary to acquire a good deal of land. Shelburne and the surrounding property are home to beaver, muskrat, and a host of birds, including black-crowned night herons and marsh wrens. Vogelmann points out that the natural system encompassing the lake exemplifies biological diversity.

The fund-raising campaign was going slowly and for a time prospects for protecting the lake looked dim. In desperation Professor Vogelmann wrote a strong letter of appeal to a Conservancy supporter, who responded with a $275,000 donation for Shelburne Pond. The gift has allowed the Vermont Chapter, which Vogelmann chairs, to purchase the entire shoreline of the 1½-mile long lake. All of the land that can be seen from the lake is gradually gaining protection as well. So far the Conservancy has acquired Shelburne Pond, nearby bogs and marshes, and both hardwood and coniferous forests.

Dr. Vogelmann's dedication and efforts go well beyond fund raising. He is recognized for his

Hub Vogelmann of Vermont.

meticulous inventories of Vermont's natural features and his knowledge of mountain ecology. In 1964 and '69 he and his graduate students prepared lists of Vermont natural areas worthy of protection. The Vermont Chapter has been so effective in acquiring those areas that almost all first-priority sites have now been preserved.

Equally involved in their own State of Ohio, Richard and Lucile Durrell have won enormous respect for their conservation efforts in Hamilton County, which encompasses Cincinnati, as well as in Adams County, some 100 miles east. Richard Durrell is a professor of geology at the University of Cincinnati, and his wife Lucile also is a trained geologist. Both have served in many local conservation groups. In addition, Professor Durrell is a past president of the nationally known Cincinnati Nature Center and has served on The Nature Conservancy's Board of Governors for seven years.

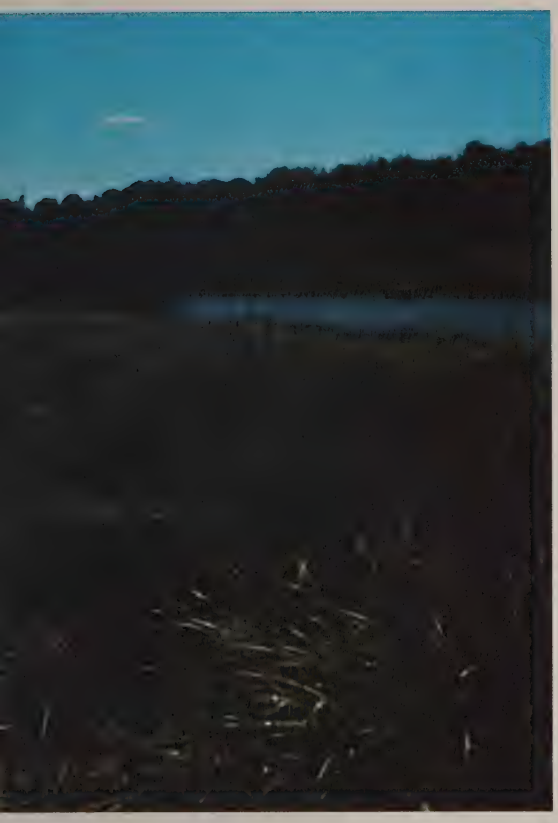
The couple owns a farm in Adams County, not far from where the Ohio River is wide, rockstrewn, and steeply bluffed. The Durrells have managed to spend almost every weekend at the farm, where they have established a base to assist the Conservancy in preserving the region's natural areas.

The land of Adams County is characteristic more of neighboring Kentucky than of Ohio—a fact that becomes evident as you leave West Union, the county seat, and head toward the nearby town of Lynx. In the sharp hills that rise dramatically ahead of you lies an unusual "collection" of remnant prairies and stone outcroppings: Lynx Prairie, the Wilderness, Buzzardroost Rock. The preserve system is called the Edge of Appalachia, because this is where the grasslands of the west meet the rough and wooded hill country of the Appalachian Plateau. Here, too, southern plants reach their northern limits. The Durrells have worked tirelessly to establish this group of sanctuaries, devoting time and money toward acquiring the land. In addition, Lucile Durrell wrote detailed guides for two of the sanctuaries. In 1979 the Conservancy's Ohio Chapter dedicated the Edge of Appalachia to the couple.

Cap'n Bill Vinal of Massachusetts views Black Pond.

Lucile and Richard Durrell of Ohio with the Conservancy's David Younkman at the 1979 dedication ceremony for the Edge of Appalachia.

As the Durrells and the Edge of Appalachia are linked, so are William G. ("Cap'n Bill") Vinal and Black Pond. Cap'n Bill had been schooled at Harvard (class of '06) and Brown, as well as at Yosemite, Glacier, and Crater Lake National Parks, where he worked as a naturalist-ranger. His knowledge of wilderness and the skills needed to live out-of-doors was unlimited. Hundreds of students learned Vinal's secrets at his nature guide school in Hudson, Ohio. His method for cooking buffalo



steak in coals without burning the meat earned him many disciples.

In later years, Cap'n Bill held the title of professor emeritus of nature education at the University of Massachusetts. He also wrote several books, including *The Naturalist's Diary, Field Guide in Botany,* and *Nature Recreation: Group Guidance for the Out-of-Doors.*

As early as 1939, Vinal was trying to arouse interest in saving Black Pond, a 55-acre site in his hometown of Norwell, Massachusetts. A glacial kettle-hole (a depression formed by glaciers as they receded from New England about 10,000 years ago), the pond itself is also a quaking bog—that is, a bog so overgrown with sphagnum moss that a thick sponge-like mat stretches across the top of the water. The mat supports a fragile and scarce plant community.

There was some talk of designating Black Pond as a state park, but apparently no action was taken. Then in late 1959, Cap'n Bill and a group of Norwell citizens convinced The Nature Conservancy to support the efforts of a local committee in protecting the pond. Cap'n Bill was the chairman. After three years of letter-writing and fund-raising drives, the committee had amassed enough money for the project. On June 2, 1962, Cap'n Bill finally tasted success: Black Pond became the Conservancy's first Massachusetts sanctuary and was dedicated as the William B. Vinal Nature Reserve. For the next 10 years, 'til the age of 90, the Captain served as preserve committee chairman, encouraging people to visit the pond and writing a history of the area, as well as a preserve guidebook.

An indispensable volunteer, George Cooley is a self-made investment banker from Albany, New York, who became interested in conservation on his annual auto trips south. Driving down through South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, he was fascinated by the roadside vegetation and started plant collections. The hobby grew, and at age 65 he embarked on a second career as a self-taught field botanist for Harvard University. One of the plants he helped identify is named after him: *Justicia cooleyi,* a southeastern water willow.

George Cooley joined the Conservancy's Board of Governors in 1960. As chairman of the finance committee, he was responsible for establishing the Conservancy's first line of credit. Furthermore, he was instrumental in creating several sanctuaries in eastern New York and several more in Florida, such as Tiger Creek in the central part of the state and the Theodore Roosevelt Preserve near Jacksonville.

To a great extent, it was Dr. Cooley's friendship with a delightful old gentleman, Willie Browne,

George Cooley of New York.

that brought about the Conservancy's acquisition of the Theodore Roosevelt Preserve—360 acres of marshland and heron rookeries. Mr. Browne had inherited the property from his father when he was only 16 years old, and had spent the following 64 years keeping it wild—thwarting developers and poachers alike. In 1969 he decided that someone else should take over the job of protecting the land.

When George Cooley first paid Willie Browne a visit, Mr. Browne had not purchased a new suit of clothes in about 50 years, even though his wilderness on the St. John's River was worth about $1.5 million. He took Dr. Cooley on a tour of the property, through the forest that had not been touched by an ax since well before the Civil War. On subsequent visits, Cooley brought the hermit gifts of his favorite vegetables—parsnips, for example—and the two men relaxed on the porch of Browne's tiny frame house, talking and admiring the wildlife-rich woods around them. On November 15, 1969, Willie Browne donated all of his land to The Nature Conservancy, an event which gained Browne and the Conservancy nationwide publicity. A contribution from Dr. Cooley to the Conservancy made it possible for Mr. Browne to remain on "his preserve." He died a year later and was buried on the land he cherished.

Some Conservancy volunteers are described by admirers as generalists who approach their jobs out of love for the work itself and the good that it does. But other volunteers, particularly those who are scientists, have devoted themselves to preserving land to protect the objects of their research as well.

Kristin Berry grew up in California's western Mojave Desert and concentrated her studies on desert wildlife while working toward her Ph. D. in zoology. In an article for the November/December 1979 issue of *The Nature Conservancy News,* she wrote that a request for help from the California Division of Highways first directed her attention toward wild desert tortoises. "One thing led to another," Dr. Berry said, and she was involved "not only in research on the behavior and ecology of . . . tortoises but launched on a campaign to preserve one of the prime remaining desert tortoise populations in the United States."

In 1973 Kristin Berry persuaded the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management to forbid off-road vehicles—which crush tortoises and destroy their burrows and food sources—from 30 square miles of prime tortoise habitat. A year later, she and several other residents of the Mojave Desert formed the Desert

Kristin Berry of California with one of the desert tortoises her work has helped protect.

Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. The group, which became a Nature Conservancy project committee in 1976, is seeking to ensure protection of the area. Today, the boundaries of the sanctuary encompass 38 square miles, for which the Bureau of Land Management has provided a woven-wire fence that almost surrounds the preserve. The Bureau has recently completed a small interpretive kiosk and nature trails in the area.

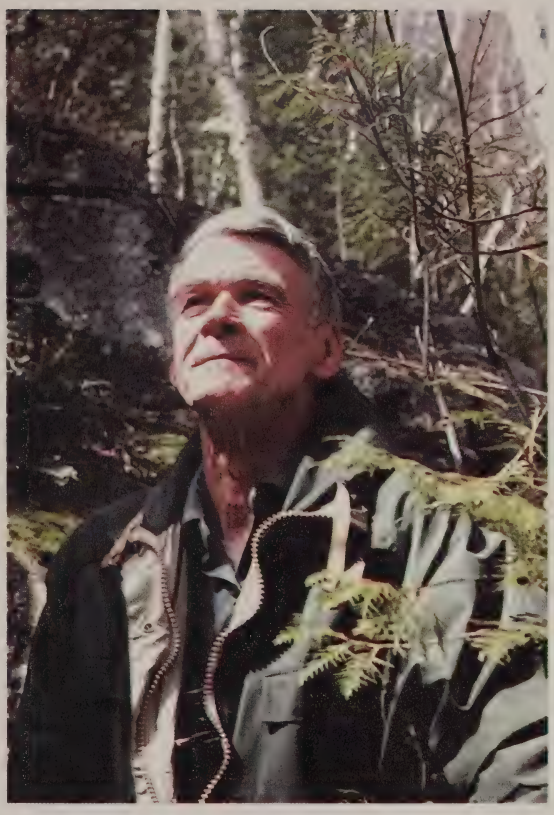
Currently lead zoologist and wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert Program, Kristin Berry was awarded a 1979 American Motors Conservation Award for her work with the desert tortoise and for her desert wildlife inventories. Her efforts are helping the American public overcome the persistent misapprehension that deserts are biological wastelands.

On the other side of the continent, a wildlife biologist with the wonderfully descriptive name Greenleaf Chase has spent many years observing another rare animal—the golden eagle. His knowledge of the raptors and their nesting sites in the high lake country of the Adirondacks enabled The Nature Conservancy in 1979 to safeguard a 500-acre area that harbors an active golden eagle nest —one of just three known in the Adirondacks.

But Chase's familiarity with the vast mountainous park goes well beyond golden eagles. He has been in the Adirondacks for 39 years, having spent 34 with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, then 2 years with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), coordinating a park-wide inventory of all the valuable ecological resources—from showy lady's-slippers to critical deer wintering areas—in the 6 million-acre wilderness. The list he compiled for APA has also been invaluable to the Adirondack Conservancy.

A board member of the Adirondack Conservancy since its founding, Greenie Chase—now retired—considers his work for this Nature Conservancy committee a full-time position, despite the fact that he is a volunteer. He is the group's chief advisor on prospective acquisitions. Because of his alertness to the park's unique botanical features, Chase and the Adirondack Conservancy were able to convince the state's Department of Conservation to purchase an area harboring the only known population of a rare orchid.

But the Adirondack Conservancy values Greenleaf Chase as much for his knowledge of the park's complexity of inholdings and people as for his biological expertise. The Adirondack's immense boundaries contain some of the wildest, most rugged backcountry in the East; but they also encompass bustling upstate towns and a pair of giant ski jumps, the tallest structures between New York City and Albany. Chase's acquaintance with the park's wildlife and wildflowers, landowners and loggers, has been gained over four decades of exploring the region. He still hikes daily year-round, and in the summer paddles the Adirondack's countless lakes and streams in his 11-foot canoe. Chase's learning, born of love for the region, prompted Adirondack Conservancy Director Tim Barnett to say, "Greenie is the most valuable citizen in the park."



Greenleaf Chase of the Adirondacks.

On Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, far removed from Greenleaf Chase's aeries, is a 137-acre wading-bird rookery called Whooping Crane Pond. While the last whooping crane in South Carolina disappeared in 1850, the rookery—a southern blue gum swamp—is home for thousands of breeding and nesting herons, egrets, and ibis between March and October.

Nancy Duane Cathcart was looking after the swamp long before the area, now owned by The Nature Conservancy and administered by Hilton Head Plantation and the local Audubon Society, had a formal stewardship committee. Her research on the pond formed the basis for the Conservancy's

management program for the preserve. She also wrote and printed, at her own expense, a brochure entitled "Summer Flora and Fauna of Whooping Crane Pond."

Mrs. Cathcart's words, art, and photography also filled other publications. Her award-winning columns "Windward Edge" and, later, "A Voice in the Wilderness" stressed environmental conservation in the region. Her first book, *The Subtropical Coast,* is a collection of 41 of her stories. The *Island Packet* and *South Carolina Wildlife* ran many of her articles.

Nancy Cathcart's efforts on behalf of the environment covered many other areas as well. She helped found three Hilton Head conservation groups—"Campaign Clean Water," "Marsh Alliance," and the "Hilton Head Environmental League"—was past president of the Hilton Head Audubon Society, and served on the boards of several other organizations, including the South Carolina Nature Conservancy. Recognized for her studies of birds, Mrs. Cathcart was appointed a research fellow with the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology.

In 1979 The Nature Conservancy honored Nancy Duane Cathcart with a President's Stewardship Award. When Mrs. Cathcart died at the age of 39, the Conservancy lost one of its most dedicated volunteers.

Nancy Cathcart of South Carolina.

Peg Watrous of Wisconsin.

Volunteers, scientists and non-scientists, comprise much of the Conservancy's organization—whether they devote themselves full-time to land conservation or simply take out a membership and convince others to do the same.

Margaret—Peg—Watrous is a volunteer who realizes the importance of members to The Nature Conservancy. For many years, she served as the Wisconsin Chapter's membership secretary (later, membership chairman)—work that all too often goes unnoticed and unsung. Under the direction of Peg Watrous and then chairman Paul Olson, the number of members in the chapter increased five to six times over. She often enclosed personal notes to people she knew and wrote letters of thanks to those who made donations. People who know Peg describe her as steadfastly dedicated to both the Conservancy's members and the cause. And her commitment to conservation goes beyond the Conservancy: she has served as secretary of the Wisconsin Natural Beauty Council and as a volunteer for environmentally active then senator Gaylord Nelson. After 15 years with the Wisconsin Chapter, Peg Watrous relinquished her chairmanship in late 1979.

* * *

Professional staff and committed volunteers are partners in The Nature Conservancy's accomplishments. But, ultimately, the personal involvement and firsthand knowledge of our thousands of active and devoted volunteers are the keys to the Conservancy's success.

Jay Heinrichs is the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Forestry,* as well as a free-lance writer and editor specializing in outdoor publications and book manuscripts.

NEW PROJECTS

FLORIDA

Sand Hill Project, Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge—Additions—(Martin County). With the acquisition of 35 acres, the Conservancy has enhanced the existing refuge with a healthy remnant of mature sand pine scrub: the state's oldest plant community type, and arguably its richest in rare species. Heavy development along Florida's east coast has all but eliminated the scrub communities that once cloaked relict beach dunes for miles. The property will be transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for management.

Seminole Ranch (Brevard, Orange, Seminole, and Volusia Counties). This 28,000-acre expanse of freshwater and switch-grass marshland east of Orlando encompasses 19 miles of the St. John's River channel and all or part of eight lakes. These include the "East Chain": a series of small, slough-like saline lakes formed by spring flow through relict salt beds. Harboring the nationally endangered bald eagle and several state-protected species (osprey, wood stork, Florida sandhill crane, and rainwater killifish among them), Seminole is also used by thousands of resident wading birds and migrants such as the endangered arctic peregrine falcon. The Conservancy acquired the land in cooperation with the St. John's River Water Management District, which will assume management within its plan for the entire Upper St. John's River Basin.

ILLINOIS

Clarksville Island (Calhoun County). Recognized as a "unique wildlife ecosystem" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the 818-acre Mississippi River island attracts wintering bald eagles, summering great blue herons and great egrets (both of them endangered in the state), and nesting birds of more than 100 species. Situated below a river lock and dam, the area has open water all winter long—a boon for waterfowl and eagles alike. Clarksville Island, which lies close to Missouri, is currently managed by the Illinois Chapter pending transfer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hazel Creek Woods (St. Clair County). Dry mesic upland forest and wet floodplain forest ecosystems comprise this tract southeast of St. Louis. Identified for preservation by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, the woods (white oak, mockernut, silver maple, American elm, cottonwood . . .) include some of the oldest trees for their forest types known in the state. The land is currently managed by the Illinois Chapter.

Jackson Slough Woods (St. Clair County). Identified and recommended for preservation by the Illinois Natural Areas Survey, this 33-acre property supports an essentially undisturbed bottomland flatwood forest. It was purchased in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Conservation, to which it will be transferred for management as a nature preserve.

Kingston Woods (DeKalb County). At its eastern extreme, this 12-acre wood is dominated by white oak, with ironwood in its low canopy and an understory of basswood, sugar maple, and hawthorn. Another portion—where two wet prairie herbs, Canada wild rye and willow herb, flourish—shows evidence of a former savanna. The property will be conveyed to the Kingston Township Park District for management as a natural area.

Massassauga Prairie (Warren County). Where do rattlesnake and rattlesnake master meet? On this five-acre prairie remnant, for one place. In the wild plum thickets and clumps of dogwood that fringe the tract's stream, eastern massassauga rattlers, *Sistrurus catenatus catenatus,* settle in for hibernation, reemerging come May to summer in adjacent upland fields. Prairie plants here (besides the thistle-like rattlesnake master) include big and little bluestem grasses, yellow and pale coneflowers, blazing star, tall cinquefoil, and purple prairie clover. The Illinois Chapter is managing the property until its transfer to the Illinois Department of Conservation.

INDIANA

Maumee Woods (Jackson County). In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the Indiana Chapter has acquired 210 forested acres: habitat for a num-

ber of game and nongame species, including white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, eastern wild turkey, and myriad songbirds. The property will be leased to Indiana Wilderness Challenge for management until incorporation in Hoosier National Forest.

Spicer Lake—Buttonbush Swamp Addititon—(St. Joseph County). Envision a floating forest—a young swamp forest and a shrub swamp that is ponded all year long. It lies in extreme northern Indiana: a 17-acre addition to Spicer Lake, protected by the Conservancy in 1978 and now a dedicated state nature preserve. The tract's native ecosystem—a euthrophying kettle-lake basin—hosts numerous bird species (herons, ducks, rails, and warblers in profusion) and buffers the existing 90-acre preserve, a textbook example of current lake succession. The property will be transferred to the St. Joseph County Park and Recreation Department for inclusion in the preserve.

MAINE

Placentia Island (Hancock County). One of Blue Hill Bay's largest undeveloped islands, 500-acre Placentia is predominantly spruce forest with some swamp and marshland. It also features steep pink granite cliffs, a brook, and several seasonal streams. A former (and perhaps a future) eagle-nesting site, the island is currently used by nesting osprey and boreal chickadees. The former owners have reserved a life estate on Placentia.

MINNESOTA

Tanglewood Nature Preserve—Addition—(Washington County). A fifth and final 20-acre gift from Samuel H. and Natalie P. Morgan enlarges Morgan Woods—bringing to 100 acres this rugged, rolling deciduous forestland preserve. In scattered openings, characteristic prairie plants thrive, including little and big bluestem grasses and lead plant. The area (a superb example of kame and kettle topography, shaped by glaciation some 20,500 years ago) has been transferred to the Science Museum of Minnesota for administration by the Lee and Rose Warner Nature Center.

MISSOURI

Buford Mountain Preserve — Addition — (Iron County). The acquisition of an 80-acre tract—oak-hickory forest with a diverse understory development of flowering dogwood, redbud, wild plum, serviceberry, rusty black haw, red maple, haw-thorn, and farkleberry—extends the existing preserve southeastward, bringing total acreage to 2,427. Bedrock here includes Buford granite porphyry, for which the mountain is the nominate locality. The land will be managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation in cooperation with the Missouri Chapter.

Cedar Creek—Addition—(Callaway County). An 80-acre woodland parcel that links two larger national forest tracts has been acquired for transfer to the U.S. Forest Service, which will use it as a trail corridor for hiking and riding within the Mark Twain National Forest.

Honey Creek Ranch

The Lone Star State is a special case for the Conservancy's National Critical Areas Conservation Program: half of America's least-protected major ecosystems (eight of sixteen) are largely or entirely confined within its borders. With the purchase of 1,825-acre Honey Creek Ranch north of San Antonio, the Texas Chapter has succeeded in safeguarding an example of one of these critical-area types: juniper-oak savanna.

But that's not this project's only prize. There's Honey Creek itself—blue-green and slightly translucent, as if shot through with mica. From its spring source in a cave just off the property, the stream slips out across the landscape, sculpting its limestone bed as it courses through shallows and riffles into still, deep pools netted with lily pads—and on from there. Perennial feeder springs swell its waters in their run past dwarf palmetto, Carolina basswood (disjunct, here, from its normal range), and imposing bald cypress with great gnarled knees that break the surface of the stream. High cliffs make one bank impassable in spots, while in others, the water is almost flush with the land.

A number of species endemic to Texas, and others whose U.S. range is limited to the state, prosper at Honey Creek: flora—Texas yucca, Texas ash, Texas tridens, Texas persimmon, Texastar; fauna—Guadalupe bass, Cagle's map turtle, four-lined skink. And spicebush, a species classified as endangered by the Texas Rare Plant Study Center, is relatively abundant as

well. Among the preserve's many birds is the increasingly rare golden-cheeked warbler (its call, a buzzy *bzzzz seewee seewee*), which breeds in juniper woods here on the Edwards Plateau.

Clues to the area's history are still emerging. Recent field work revealed an extraordinary geological feature—a basalt dike, 50 feet wide and several hundred yards long, that stripes the limestone. Evidence suggests that some 65 million years ago, in the Cretaceous Period, volcanic activity forced the dark rock up through a crack.

There's still so much to discover at Honey Creek Ranch, but one thing's clear: from upland savanna to riparian woods, this is a star preserve . . . not only for the Texas Chapter, which has set its fund-raising sights at $3.5 million for the project, but for the Conservancy as a whole.

Onondaga Cave (Lester B. Dill) State Park (Crawford County). First opened for tours in 1904, when thousands attending the St. Louis World's Fair explored it by torchlight, spectacular Onondaga Cave now welcomes more than 100,000 visitors each year. In cooperation with the State of Missouri, the Conservancy has acquired 881 acres encompassing Onondaga and another large cave (Missouri Caverns) on the Meramec River. A national natural landmark and a projected state park, the property provides habitat for nationally endangered Indiana and gray bats as well as blind salamanders, a species of concern in the state. Onondaga is managed by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks and Historic Preservation.

Wah' Kon-Tah Prairie — Addition — (St. Clair County). A rolling 80-acre tract embracing 60 acres of tallgrass prairie (on which bluestems, Indian grass, dropseed, and several *panicums* are dominant) brings preserve acreage to 718. The upland sandpiper and greater prairie chicken, both endangered in Missouri prosper here, as do a number of more common species, including ornate box turtles, leopard frogs, marsh hawks, great blue herons, bobwhite quail, prairie meadow mice. . . . The preserve is currently managed by the Conservancy's Missouri Chapter.

NEW MEXICO

Gila Riparian Project (Grant County). The Southwest's riparian habitats stand high on the Conservancy's list of national critical areas. Selected for protection by the New Mexico Natural Heritage Program, several private holdings along the Gila River and Mogollon Creek, its intermittent tributary, comprise a projected preserve assemblage for the New Mexico Field Office, which has already purchased two adjacent tracts totaling 87 acres. These lush gallery woodlands (vigorous sycamores and an extensive sweep of Fremont cottonwood and Goodding willow) and surrounding desert country are a birder's dream: more than half of all avian species found in New Mexico—from the nationally endangered peregrine falcon to the state endangered Gila woodpecker—have used the area. And there are state-endangered fish (loach minnow, spike dace, roundtail chub) and reptiles (Arizona coral snake, narrow-headed gartersnake) as well. The land will be managed by a committee of the New Mexico Chapter, which has already raised $212,000 of the $240,000 it needs in acquisition and endowment funds for the project.

OHIO

Hanging Prairie—Addition—(Adams County). For two decades, the Conservancy has devoted acquisition efforts to the Edge of Appalachia Preserve System: an assemblage of southern Ohio natural areas riddled with steep gorges, artesian springs, and dolomitic promontories. The most recent addition is a wooded, ravine-crossed 152-acre tract joining Hanging Prairie and Cave Hollow. The terrain is rugged and embraces some 35 acres of prairie openings and old fields. Two state-endangered animals, Allegheny packrat and green salamander, and several state-threatened plants occur in the area—slender blazing star, lesser ladies' tresses, and tall larkspur among them. The property will be managed by the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History in concert with the Ohio Chapter.

OREGON

Rowena Dell Plateau—Addition—(Wasco County). Well-known among amateur and professional botanists for its superb wildflower display and its wide range of plant species, northern Oregon's Rowena Dell Plateau straddles the ecological juncture between Columbia River Gorge and the Columbia Basin. A 120-acre non-adjacent addition to the existing 34-acre preserve (a state park joins the two) bears hillslope bunchgrass communities in exceptionally good condition and some 200 Hood's locoweed plants—long a candidate for federal protection. The preserve is managed by the Oregon Field Office, which is working to raise $140,000 to fund the project and a management endowment.

PENNSYLVANIA

Thompson Wetlands — Addition — (Susquehanna County). At the heart of a projected preserve assemblage that will safeguard two large wetland areas connected by a clear, swift-flowing stream, lies Krall's Bog. The sphagnum bog is surrounded by tamarack, balsam fir, and black spruce trees—all at the limits of their ranges. Adjacent land exhibits an unusual overall mix of vegetation associations (hemlock woods, sedge meadow, cattail marsh) with a remarkable variety of wild flowers, ferns, and mosses. This 72-acre addition sets total preserve acreage at 232. The area (also known as Weirs Pond/Krall's Bog) is managed by the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter's local stewardship committee.

TEXAS

Barrow Ranch (Chambers County). Adjacent to the Intracoastal Waterway on the Gulf Coast, 12,670-acre Barrow Ranch sustains a productive coastal marshgrass ecosystem that hosts waterfowl yearround and offers wintering grounds for numerous geese and other migrant birds. All told, more than 250 bird species use the marsh, which has been recognized as a scarce, fragile resource by the State of Texas. Home to at least three nationally endangered species (bald eagle, American alligator, and peregrine falcon), this property is charted for transfer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion in Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge southwest of it.

VIRGINIA

Short Hill (Loudoun County). From whorled, summit outcrops to densely forested slopes (paw paw and tulip poplar) to the silver maples, river birch, and giant sycamores that line the Potomac River's south bank—this 370-acre natural area is a hiker's delight. Osprey and other raptors soar above the ridgeline, and there have been sightings of bobcats and bears. Red-berried elder grows on Short Hill's north-facing quartzite cliffs at its lowest elevation in the state. Identified in local, state, regional, and federal plans as potential conservation land, the property has been conveyed to the National Park Service for inclusion in Harper's Ferry National Historic Park.

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The Board of Governors has recently elected to Honorary Membership for Life all donors of a perpetual interest in a natural area and all donors of irrevocable deferred gifts. It is a pleasure to give public recognition to these members, along with new Honorary Members for Life who have made outright gifts of natural land.

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PHOTOS: Gloria and Anthony Anable, p. 12; John Apperson, p. 15; Susan Bournique, pp. 5, 6; George Cathcart, p. 24 left; Elaine Emmi, p. 22; John Hall, inside front cover; Robert Jenkins, p. 18; Robert Klein, p. 19; R. W. Parvin, p. 27; Fan Taylor, p. 24 right; S. Wollman, p. 17.

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